

REPORT

TO THE

Chamber of Commerce,

SAINT JOHN, N. B.,

OF THEIR DELEGATES

TO THE

COMMERCIAL CONVENTION,

HELD IN

DETROIT, MICH., JULY 1865.

(PUBLISHED BY ORDER.)

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1865.

Chamber of Commerce,

Saint John, Tuesday, 1st August, 1865.

At a Meeting of the Council of the Chamber of Commerce, held this day by order of the President, for the reception of the Gentlemen who had represented this Mercantile community in the Convention held at Detroit, commencing on the 11th July ult.,—

Hon. W. H. STEVES, WILLIAM PARKS, JOHN BOYD, and C. H. FAIRWEATHER, Esquires, being present:

Mr. BOYD, on the part of the Delegates, read a Report of their views on the transactions which took place at the Convention. Whereupon it was moved by A. JARDINE, Esq., that the Report now read be received, and published in our City Journals, and in pamphlet form, by the Chamber, for distribution: And further, that the thanks of the Chamber are due to the gentlemen who, at a sacrifice of their valuable time, and at their own expense, kindly represented the commercial interests of this Province at that Convention.

Extract from the minutes,

I. WOODWARD, *Secretary.*

REPORT.

The Delegates appointed by the Chamber of Commerce to the Commercial Convention at Detroit beg to report that they have attended to the duty, and now offer some remarks in reference to the work and its results.

Mr. BOTSFORD and Mr. FAIRWEATHER left here on the 3rd inst.; Messrs. FISHER, STEEVES, PARKS, PICKARD, BOLTON, BOYD, on the 6th, with the P. E. Island Delegates. We all arrived on the 10th, the day previous to the meeting. We were joined, near Portland, by the Bangor Delegation, and at Toronto by a portion of the Canadian and Nova Scotia Delegates: with these we became acquainted, and entered into conversation on the objects and prospects of the mission.

On the evening previous to the general meeting the Maritime Delegates held a meeting, and decided to meet the Canadian Delegates, and if possible pursue a common policy. The resolutions adopted by the Canadians at a preliminary meeting in Toronto were placed in our hands: these embodied our views, and we decided to act in conjunction with them. A general Committee meeting of all the Colonial Delegates was held the next morning. Hon. Thomas Ryan of Montreal was chosen Chairman, and Mr. Patterson, Secretary of the Montreal Board of Trade, Secretary.

For reasons which have been fully justified by the result we decided that the Colonial Delegates should not take part in the organization of the Convention, or vote on any

matters that might come up either on Committee or in the Convention.

We decided also that while the Convention was called to discuss questions of Finance, Currency, Revenue, Transit, Reciprocity; the two latter only affected us, and we should therefore decline going before any Committee but those appointed on Transit and Reciprocity.

At eleven o'clock on the 11th ult., the Convention was formally opened; the Delegates present numbered nearly six hundred. An address was delivered by the President of the Detroit Board; General WALLBRIDGE of New York chosen Chairman, and Vice-Chairmen Messrs. HAMBLIN, WALKER, SEYMOUR, LITTEJOHN, McMASTER, PARKS, COLES, &c. The question of voting was decided according to Congressional State arrangement, the Colonists taking no part.

This basis we present in explanation of the vote given :

Board of Trade, Albany, N. Y.	5
Board of Trade, Buffalo, N. Y.	6
Board of Trade, Bay City, Mich.	1½
Board of Trade, Boston, Mass.	6½
Mercantile Association, Bangor, Me.	3½
Corn Exchange, Boston, Mass.	6½
Board of Trade, Chicago, Ill.	6
Mercantile Association, Chicago, Ill.	4
Chamber of Commerce, Cairo, Ill.	5
Chamber of Commerce, Cincinnati, O.	10
Board of Trade, Cleveland, O.	5
Board of Trade, Detroit	4
Board of Trade, Erie, Pa.	5
Michigan Central Board of Trade, Kalamazoo	1
Chamber of Commerce, Milwaukee, Wis.	8
Chamber of Commerce, New York	7
Commercial Association, New York	7
Board of Trade, Oswego, N. Y.	4
Board of Trade, Philadelphia, Pa.	6
Corn Exchange Association, Philadelphia	5
Coal Exchange, Philadelphia	4

Board of Trade, Portland, Me.	3½
Board of Trade, Pittsburgh, Pa.	6
Board of Trade, St. Paul, Minn.	4
Board of Trade, St. Louis, Mo.	11
Board of Trade, Springfield, Ohio	2
Board of Trade, East Saginaw, Mich.	1½
Board of Trade, Toledo, Ohio	4
Board of Trade, Troy, N. Y.	4
Burlington, Iowa	8

Committees were appointed, and before these your Delegates appeared, and presented in writing and in conversation, facts and arguments bearing on the questions before them: the result of which was that the Transit Committee reported the following Resolutions, which were carried :

“ Whereas the annual increase of the productions of the States bordering upon, and tributary to the Northern Lakes, has exceeded the capacity of transportation of all the avenues to the Atlantic, demonstrating the urgent necessity of enlarged water communication for commercial intercourse between the East and the West ;

“ And Whereas the canals and various lines of railroad leading to and from said lakes, while they have contributed largely to develop the resources, increase the wealth, and promote the permanent union of our whole country, are wholly inadequate to the demands of this immensely and rapidly growing commerce; therefore

“ Resolved, That this Convention regard the construction of a Ship Canal around the Falls of Niagara a national work of great importance, alike demanded by the necessity of commerce and political wisdom, and that its early completion by the general government is required by every principle of sound political economy.

“ Resolved, That we hail with satisfaction the proposed enlargement of the Welland and St. Lawrence Canals, and other proposed improvements through the British Provinces, affording other cheap outlets by which the commerce of the States tributary to the lakes may seek our Eastern markets, and the markets of the world.

"Resolved, That in the event of the negotiations of
 "a Treaty of Reciprocity between the United States and
 "the British North American Provinces, our Government
 "should be careful to receive in such treaty a guarantee
 "of a sufficient depth of water to enable screw steamers
 "of not less than one thousand tons carrying capacity to
 "pass from Port Colborne, C. W., to tide water."

A minority report on the same subject was introduced, opposing all reference to the Reciprocity Treaty, but this was subsequently withdrawn and the first passed, omitting the terms a "military necessity," that being a matter upon which, as commercial men, they would express no opinion.

The Reciprocity Committee then, by a vote of 17 to 3, reported in favor of the principle.

Much discussion took place among the American Delegates in the Convention during the first two days, marked by strong opposition to the Treaty; the conflicting interests of competing sections of the country were continually at issue, while the spirit and language of a large number was clearly hostile to us as the subjects of another, and as some rudely stated a "hostile government," whose country had been built up at the expense of their own. During these discussions the Colonial Delegates were silent, and from a reliable quarter we learned that the vote on Reciprocity, had it been taken at the close of the second day, would have been 86½ against and 64½ for. Before the vote was taken on the transit resolutions, the Hon. MALCOLM CAMERON, of Quebec, spoke, and replied with powerful effect to the charges against us, creating a very favorable impression, and causing to be put *under* the table a resolution by a Delegate from Iowa to this effect:

"Resolved, That our experience of the thing called
 "'Reciprocity' in trade with the United States and British
 "Provinces, convinces us that a very large balance of
 "benefits has accrued against the people of the United

"States commercially thereby, and that inasmuch as
 "politically our neighbours have shewn themselves to be
 "in feeling, as they are in law, part and parcel of the
 "British Empire we see no good reason why advantages
 "should be conceded to them, not shewn to their fellow
 "subjects in other quarters.

"Resolved, That our neighbours have no commercial
 "advantages to offer us, at all equivalent to the unre-
 "strained enjoyment of our markets for the products of
 "their fields and forests, which come in direct competi-
 "tion with, and injuriously affect the value of our own
 "articles of a similar character, controlling alike the
 "revenues of our government and the profits of the
 "people."

The profoundly philosophic and enlightened commercial views of this gentleman were not appreciated by even his American friends, and he, we believe, was not heard from again.

We were continually holding Committee Meetings, and when not in Convention, arranging our plans. Every meeting of the Convention proved more clearly the necessity for remaining aloof from active participation in the general business. Before the Committees, and wherever we could, in public and private, your Delegates presented the claims of the Maritime Provinces—in regard to the Registration of our Ships—the Coasting Trade, and the inclusion of articles in the new treaty, the products of our country, which had been overlooked in the old treaty. We presented various statistics and arguments bearing upon all these points, which were attentively listened to, and carefully noted.

Before the Convention, also, we were prepared and intended to review the whole question of Reciprocity, with special reference to the Maritime Provinces; but our policy being as far as possible, to leave the discussion in the hands of the Americans, and they to answer their own

objections, we refrained from speaking. Hon. JOSEPH HOWE was the only speaker of the British Delegates on the question of Reciprocity—the speakers being—

FOR.	AGAINST.
SEYMOUR, of New York.	HAMBLIN, of Maine.
SABINE, " Massachusetts.	BLAKE, " "
Joy, " Michigan.	KENNEDY, " Pennsylvania.
HERSEY, " Maine.	
SCAMMON, " Illinois.	
HOWE, " Nova Scotia.	

Mr. HOWE's speech almost exhausted the question, and produced a powerful effect, the facts being to the great majority there wholly unknown; the changing feeling of the Convention in favor of Reciprocity induced by the facts presented on Committee was now wholly turned, and at the conclusion of his address of nearly three hours, the vote of the Convention was taken upon the Resolution moved by Hon. FRED. FRAHLEY, of Philadelphia:

"Resolved, That this Convention do respectfully request the President of the United States to enter into negotiations with the Government of Great Britain, having in view the execution of a treaty between the two countries for reciprocal commercial intercourse between the United States and the several provinces of British North America, including British Columbia, the Selkirk Settlement, and Vancouver's Island, based on principles which shall be just and equitable to all parties, and with reference to the present financial condition of the United States, and which shall also include the free navigation of the St. Lawrence and the other rivers of British North America, with such improvements of the rivers and enlargement of the canals as shall render them adequate for the requirements of the West in communicating with the Ocean."

This was carried unanimously, the votes being of the full number in the Convention—one hundred and fifty-five.

As the chairmen of the different delegations said aye, they were heartily applauded, and the decision from the Chair was received with tumultuous cheering. The work of the Convention then appeared to be done ; good feeling was on every side ; resolutions complimentary to each other passed, one of which, by Hon. Mr. ELLIOT, of Missouri, was so friendly, coming from one who had in the early part of the Convention expressed himself against Reciprocity, that we report it :

“Resolved, That the American Delegates to this Convention have experienced much pleasure in mingling with the Delegates from the British Provinces, and we trust that the intelligent gentlemen who have lent us their presence may bear to their homes as pleasant memories of us as we shall retain of them.”

To this the chairman of the Colonial Committee, Hon. THOMAS RYAN, replied, and we have here pleasure in bearing testimony to the universal expression in his favor for the courtesy, dignity and good feeling displayed by him as presiding officer of our meetings.

A Committee had been appointed on Weights and Measures, but they were unable to report fully. The subject of a uniform Currency was named, but in the present financial condition of the United States, its public consideration was not deemed advisable.

A speech from the Chairman, and cheers for the President of the United States and the Queen of England, closed the Convention.

The Colonial Committee then met, and resolutions were passed recommending the formation of an Inter-Colonial Board of Trade ; the Montreal Board was requested to prepare a Constitution, communicate with other Boards, and, if possible, hold a general meeting this Fall : also, that the various commercial bodies be requested to unite in procuring a suitable Testimonial to Hon. JOSEPH HOWE

for his distinguished advocacy of British Colonial interests before the Convention. On the latter subject, each body was requested to communicate with the Montreal Board.

In the course of the general discussion, we noted that the great object of the West is to secure more ample communication with the Atlantic. Various subjects were debated with much ability : the Niagara Ship Canal, although a felt necessity, they cannot hope for, as the expense would be enormous, and the Government, under present financial pressure, could not undertake it as a government work, but upon the widening and deepening of the Canadian Canals, which can be done at an outlay that will prove remunerative, and upon the free navigation of the St. Lawrence, their chief reliance is placed, and these were to be made the main points in new negotiations.

The value of the Fisheries was ably shown by the New York Delegates, and also by Mr. HERSEY, of Portland, in reply to Mr. BLAKE, of Bangor.

Our Timber privileges are evidently envied by Maine and Michigan ; the former, referring to New Brunswick, said, they in Maine had to pay a high price for their lumber lands, while we obtained ours for merely nominal prices, giving us advantages over them in the markets of their own country ; they said they asked no protection, but that our timber lands should be sold for their value, as in Maine.

A feeling prevailed among many leading Americans, that the large party in the Provinces who sympathized with the North in the late struggle, was therefore in favor of annexation to the United States ; acting upon this, and advised by some of their political leaders, they were opposed to Reciprocity under our present relations, hoping, by refusing this, to force the Provinces from their allegiance to Britain, and for trade benefits, to join them. This idea was freely discussed, and it was attempted to be

shewn by us, and we think successfully, that this was a mistake, and that whatever views were held in the Colonies, any attempt to *force* new political relations upon us would only end in disappointment to those who would make the experiment.

It was freely said by their leading men, that these Colonies could not much longer remain as they are; that they must either form a union with each other, or with the United States, and as the disposition of the Maritime Provinces appeared to them to be against union among themselves, they hoped for the larger union with the States, as General WALLBRIDGE stated in his opening speech before the Convention, when he said, "Perhaps I may suggest that our system of Government admits of indefinite extension, and if hereafter, in the Providence of God, they should see fit to ask closer association with us, we cannot but accept the desire with pleasure; it will help us to discharge the obligations we have incurred in the prosecution of our late war; it will relieve us, and be a reciprocity to them in the fullest sense."

Leading American gentlemen, who were not imbued with the Monroe Doctrine, and who believe that it would be for the interest of both countries if a strong consolidated Government was established on this Northern Continent, said,—if the union of these Provinces was once accomplished, their people would then give up the idea of annexation, and at once enter upon terms of trade and amity with us.

Your Delegates believe, in conclusion, that this interchange of sentiment will be attended with great good. On the invitation of gentlemen of the Convention, some went further West, to Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis, Cincinnati, &c., free passes by railways and steamers being generously offered; and on all occasions, in public

and private, we endeavored to impart information regarding the past and present of our trade, our political and international relations, which was eagerly listened to, while we enjoyed the hospitality of our Western friends, which was open and boundless as their prairies. We doubt not that the kindly feeling elicited on both sides will produce results much to be desired—the good sense of the American people will discover that it is for mutual interests that we continue friends, and in that spirit we bade each other a hearty farewell.

WM. PARKS,
WM. H. STEEVES,
A. E. BOTSFORD,
CHARLES FISHER,
C. H. FAIRWEATHER,
JOHN BOLTON,
JOHN BOYD.

St. John, N. B., August 1, 1865.

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